AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for updating a hierarchical classification dictionary, the apparatus comprising:

a processor;

an update proposal receiving unit that receives a proposal for updating a hierarchical classification dictionary, the hierarchical classification dictionary having a hierarchical structure including a class that defines the hierarchical structure, the class including ~~a property~~ properties defining a hierarchical class ~~structure~~ and ~~an attribute that is a detailed information field~~ a set of attributes comprising groups of information fields of the class and the property, wherein the hierarchical classification dictionary includes sub classification classes that inherit properties from upper classification classes;

a proposal history storing unit that stores previously ~~past~~ received proposals to update the hierarchical classification dictionary;

an approximate proposal extracting unit that extracts one of the previously ~~past~~ received proposals stored by the proposal history storing unit that approximates a latest received proposal, the extracted proposal being extracted by searching the previously ~~past~~ received proposals using a search technique to determine that the extracted proposal approximates the latest received proposal, wherein the search technique used to extract the previously ~~past~~ received proposal uses a first mathematical formula when

~~differs based on whether~~ the latest received proposal is a proposal to edit the hierarchical classification dictionary [[or]] <u>and uses a second mathematical formula when the latest received proposal is</u> a proposal to add to the hierarchical classification dictionary<u>, the second mathematical formula being different than the first mathematical formula</u>; and

an approximate proposal presenting unit that presents the extracted proposal.

2. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the proposal presented by the approximate proposal presenting unit contains a content of the proposal received by the update proposal receiving unit, a result of evaluation indicating one of rejection and acceptance of the proposal received by the update proposal receiving unit, a content of a comment on the proposal received by the update proposal receiving unit, and information on a degree of approximation that is a result of calculation of the degree of approximation.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein when the received proposal is a proposal for adding one of a new class and a new property, the approximate proposal extracting unit searches the proposal history storing unit for a past received proposal based on respective attributes of the proposal for adding, to extract the proposal that most closely approximates the proposal for adding.

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein when the received proposal is for adding a new class, the approximate proposal extracting unit searches the proposal history storing unit for a proposal with a highest degree of similarity to a collection of properties of the proposal for adding, to extract the proposal that approximates the proposal for adding.

6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising an addition target searching unit that is configured to, when the received proposal is a proposal for adding one of a new class and a new property, advise of an addition target where the proposal for adding is to be added, according to a location of the proposal extracted by the approximate proposal extracting unit.

7. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 6, wherein when the received proposal is a proposal for adding a new class, the addition target searching unit advises of the addition target according to a hierarchical structure of the proposal found as a result of search based on a part or a whole of properties of the proposal for adding.

8. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 6, wherein when the received proposal is a proposal for adding a new class, the addition target searching unit advises of the addition target according to a result of comparison between a property of the proposal found as a result of search based on a content of an attribute of the proposal for adding, and a property of the proposal for adding.

9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 6, wherein when the received proposal is a proposal for adding a new property, the addition target searching unit advises that a class that defines the proposal approximate to the received proposal is presented as the addition target.

10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a proposal advice presenting unit that is configured to advise of a result of evaluation indicating rejection of the received proposal, when the proposal extracted by the approximate proposal extracting unit is identical with the received proposal.

11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a proposal advice presenting unit that is configured to advise of a result of evaluation of the proposal extracted by the approximate proposal extracting unit as a result of evaluation of the received proposal.

12. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 10, further comprising an evaluating and commenting unit that makes a dictionary manager evaluate and comment on the received proposal according to the result of evaluation given as advice.

13. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 11, further comprising an evaluating and commenting unit that makes a dictionary manager

evaluate and comment on the received proposal according to the result of evaluation given as advice.

14. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a history statistics analyzing unit that generates statistics and analyzes a history of the past received proposals stored in the proposal history storing unit; and

a reuse proposal presenting unit that extracts a past received proposal to reuse from the proposal history storing unit according to the statistics and the analysis of the history, notifies a proposer of the reuse, and presents the proposal to reuse.

15. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 14, further comprising a degree-of-attention presenting unit that presents a class, a property, and an attribute with a high degree of attention based on the statistics and the analysis of the history.

16. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a proposal draft receiving unit that receives a proposal that approximates a proposal draft;

a simulative approximate proposal extracting unit that makes the proposal extracting unit search for the proposal received by the proposal draft receiving unit; and

a simulative approximate proposal presenting unit that presents the proposal extracted by the simulative approximate proposal extracting unit.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) A method of updating a classification dictionary executed by an apparatus for updating a hierarchical classification dictionary comprising a processor, the method comprising:

receiving a proposal for updating a hierarchical classification dictionary, the hierarchical classification dictionary having a hierarchical structure including a class that defines the hierarchical structure, the class including a~~ property~~ properties defining a hierarchical class ~~structure~~ and ~~an attribute that is a detailed information field~~ a set of attributes comprising groups of information fields of the class and the property, wherein the hierarchical classification dictionary includes sub classification classes that inherit properties from upper classification classes;

storing previously ~~past~~ received proposals to update the hierarchical classification dictionary;

extracting one of the previously ~~past~~ received proposals that approximates a latest received proposal, the extracted proposal being extracted by searching the previously ~~past~~ received proposals using a search technique to determine that the extracted proposal approximates the latest received proposal, wherein the search technique used to extract the previously ~~past~~ received proposal uses a first mathematical formula when ~~differs based on whether~~ the latest received proposal is a

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proposal to edit the hierarchical classification dictionary [[or]] and uses a second

mathematical formula when the latest received proposal is a proposal to add to the

hierarchical classification dictionary, the second mathematical formula being different

than the first mathematical formula; and

presenting the extracted proposal.